

Justice Matters

a publication from the Maryland Judiciary

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REDEFINING JUSTICE?

Problem-Solving Courts Create New Course to Tackle Crime

The number of problem-solving courts has grown throughout the country and in Maryland as the public and other branches of state government look to the courts to help solve the problem of crime through non-traditional methods. These courts respond to the underlying problems that bring defendants into court—drug or alcohol addiction, mental illness, and/or family or personal issues. In Maryland, problem-solving courts include drug treatment court (adult and juvenile, driving under the influence, and family dependency), mental health court, and truancy court. Participation is voluntary.

There are many challenges to operating problem-solving courts, from staffing, space, and budgets, to the interdisciplinary challenge of coordinating the efforts of diverse agencies to try to tackle complex issues. It is also a new role for judges, trained as neutral arbiters of law, who can find themselves as active participants in a rehabilitative process.

“Some view judges as umpires who only call balls and strikes,” said Baltimore City District Judge Jamey H. Weitzman, chairperson of the Standing Committee on Problem-Solving Courts (see sidebar). “But the world is changing, and some of the things that we used to do are not effective. We need to be more expansive in our views of the roles of the courts and judges. Who says that we have to keep doing things the way we’ve always done them?”

“My situation was pretty bleak when I came to drug court. I am very grateful that I was offered the drug court treatment program. It helped me a lot. It saved my life.”

- Drug court graduate

There are now 36 adult and juvenile drug courts, DUI courts, and family dependency courts in Maryland, with plans to establish more. There are two mental health courts—in Baltimore City and Harford County. And, since 2005, a pilot program of four truancy courts in the First Circuit (Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties) has been operating under the jurisdiction of Administrative Judge Daniel Long.

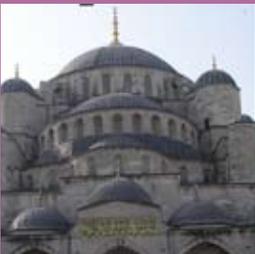
The most established of the problem-solving courts in Maryland is drug treatment court, which started in 1994. The number is growing because evaluations and studies of Maryland’s drug courts are proving that they work where traditional methods have not.

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New Process for High Conflict Cases Introduced

Richard Abbott contributed to this report

Because it is presiding over an increasing number of domestic cases with a high degree of conflict between parents, the Circuit Court of Baltimore County has developed an innovative process to address family issues and protect those who are most vulnerable in these disputes—children.

Many of these “high conflict” cases, which may also include allegations of drug and/or alcohol abuse or domestic violence against a party or a child, tend to take an inordinate amount of judicial time. Without appropriate services and judicial attention, there is a potential for the children caught up in these disputes to suffer a great deal of harm.

The court determined that if it could identify these cases earlier in the process and refer parties to appropriate services as soon as possible, the likely results would be a decrease in the level of conflict between the parties, a reduction in the need for judicial sanctions, and less stress and harm to the children.

“Our goal is to ensure the safety and psychological well-being of children, reduce the number of modification and contempt filings by creating long lasting agreements, and reduce the time judges are required to spend on these high conflict cases,” said Baltimore County Circuit Judge John Hennegan.

To address this problem, the family division created a subcommittee to look at how best to identify and process these high-conflict domestic cases. In August 2004, the Subcommittee on High Conflict Domestic Cases crafted a plan with the following objectives:

- 1 Identify domestic cases with high-conflict/domestic abuse issues very early on;
- 2 Target the most appropriate and least intrusive services that will meet the needs of these families and, thereby, conserve judicial resources;
- 3 Encourage the parties to be self-determining with regard to how they parent their children;
- 4 Reduce the likelihood that families will appear before multiple judges and receive conflicting rulings
- 5 Protect vulnerable members of the family, especially children, from being psychologically, emotionally, and physically harmed; and
- 6 Provide long-lasting resolutions to these disputes.

The underlying theory behind the new process is that all child access disputes should not be treated alike. For example, traditional visitation schedules may work for parents who are able to co-parent—because successful visitation arrangements require clear communication and frequent contact between the parents. When parents cannot cooperate with one another, traditional visitation schedules may exacerbate the situation because they provide so many opportunities for conflict.

“As a result, children are likely to be thrust into the middle of bitter arguments, and possibly into physical or emotional danger,” Judge Hennegan said. “The longer the conflict lasts and the higher its intensity, the greater likelihood that the children caught in these disputes will

be seriously harmed. Reducing conflict must be the primary goal in any visitation plan between parents who remain engaged in a bitter struggle with each other. It’s paramount that the courts work to place the decision making process regarding visitation and custody in the parents’ hands when at all possible.”

The high-conflict process for child access cases requires that a family division master and a professional, clinically licensed social worker screen cases at the time of the settlement/scheduling conference. The court requires that parties complete a questionnaire designed to identify the characteristics and issues that are often involved in a high-conflict child access dispute.

If, from the questionnaire and the in-depth interview, the social worker/screener determines that a case is high-conflict, the social worker/screener provides the parties with a plan to ensure that the least intrusive services will be utilized in the most expeditious and timely manner possible for all cases. **Mr. Abbott is a family law administrator.**



New Judges “Learn the Ropes”



photo by Dan Clark

The 2007 class of new trial judges gather for a group photo during their orientation. Pictured are (left to right) Judges Thomas, Bernstein, Howard, White, Russell, Bryant, Legum, Duley, Conroy, McCally, Sarsfield, Cotton, Simmons, Crawford, Panos, and Chapdelaine. Not pictured are Judges Doory, McCormick, and Northrop, who were elevated from the District Court to the Circuit Court.

The New Trial Judge Orientation was held in May. At the annual event, Maryland’s newest judges took part in a mandatory, five-and-a-half-day, intensive series of courses and discussions, learning from their more experienced colleagues, members of the bar, and each other. This year’s class of 19 included six new and three elevated Circuit Court and 10 new District Court judges.

Circuit Court

Hon. Charles G. Bernstein, Baltimore City; Hon. Yvette Michelle Bryant, Baltimore City; Hon. A. Michael Chapdelaine, Prince George’s County; Hon. Timothy J. Doory*, Baltimore City; Hon. John A. Howard, Baltimore City; Hon. Mary Beth McCormick*, Montgomery County; Hon. Albert W. Northrop*, Prince George’s County; Hon. George Levi Russell, III, Baltimore City; Hon. Pamela J. White, Baltimore City. *Elevated

District Court

Hon. John M. Conroy, Montgomery County; Hon. DaNeeka Varner Cotton, Prince George’s County; Hon. Gary Lewis Crawford, Montgomery County; Hon. Patrick Ridgeway Duley, Prince George’s County; Hon. Jonas D. Legum, Anne Arundel County; Hon. Cheryl A. McCally, Montgomery County; Hon. Christopher L. Panos, Baltimore City; Hon. James B. Sarsfield, Montgomery County; Hon. William G. Simmons, Montgomery County; Hon. Mark D. Thomas, Washington County.

Garrett County Remembers

In the past eight months, Garrett County has suffered the loss of Circuit Judge Frederick A. Thayer, III, District Judge Ralph M. Burnett, and Clerk of the Circuit Court David K. Martin. In June, the Garrett County Commissioners renamed the courthouse that houses the Circuit Court to honor Judge Thayer’s memory and his long commitment to the county and the courts. A dedication ceremony was held in July for the Ralph M. Burnett Memorial Bridge to honor the late judge’s “dedication and service to the citizens of Garrett County and to the courts of Maryland.” The bridge is located near one of Judge Burnett’s favorite fly-fishing spots. Pictured left to right, at the bridge dedication are Commissioner Ernie Gregg, Judge Burnett’s son Chase Burnett, Commissioner Denny Glotfelty, Commissioner Fred Holliday, and Sen. George Edwards. [Reporter Sarah Moses of the Cumberland Times-News and the editors of the Republican newspaper contributed to this story.](#)



photo courtesy of the Republican newspaper

Problem-Solving Courts Address

(continued from page 1)

“Treatment alone does not work; incarceration alone does not work,” said Gray Barton, executive director of the Office of Problem-Solving Courts. “But drug courts have shown, over the past 15 to 18 years, that when you integrate treatment with the weight of the court you get better outcomes.”

Studies show that drug courts can be cost-effective. Most recently, an in-depth evaluation of the juvenile drug court in Harford County showed that juvenile defendants who took part in the program were less likely to commit crimes afterwards, and the program saved money overall. (The full report is online at <http://mdcourts.gov/opsc/dtcc/index.html>.)

Addressing problems such as addiction, mental illness, and truancy in a holistic way is a new role for courts and for judges, who work with other government agencies and community organizations to provide a true interdisciplinary approach to each case. Judge Weitzman cited drug court as an example.

“It’s not enough to just treat the addiction, one has to treat the contributing factors, such as homelessness or lack of job skills, and education. We provide wrap-around services to address underlying issues,” Judge Weitzman said. “We’ve had participants who have told me that they have lost everything—their apartment, family, jobs, health. We provide a lot of support services, such as housing, support groups, job skills, and training, so that we can help to provide a better life for people once they are off of drugs and no longer chasing that high.”

The proactive role of the team is a major component of problem-solving courts. “They aren’t waiting for a problem to happen. What they are hoping to do is avoid a problem by getting to the root of all the issues,” Barton said. Mental health courts in Maryland follow the same proactive format, working to direct eligible offenders with serious mental illness away from incarceration and into appropriate community services; close monitoring is essential.

“The team, with the judge as leader, decides how best to handle each case, whether it should be kept pretrial, whether a plea should be taken, et cetera,” Baltimore City

District Judge Charlotte M. Cooksey said. Judge Cooksey presides over Maryland’s first mental health court, which she set up five years ago. Maryland’s other mental health court, in Harford County, was established in 2004 by District Judge Mimi Cooper.

“Teamwork is essential, as is the participant’s willingness,” Judge Cooksey explained. “A treatment plan is developed by a clinician and is incorporated into the court order. If things go awry, the defendant can be brought into court very quickly. If they’ve decompensated to the point that hospitalization is required, that can be accomplished. We can draw on other services and enhance the plan, if necessary.”

Identifying outside resources is one challenge; another is finding court resources, including establishing time on dockets. “It takes creative management,” Judge Weitzman said. “If the docket is small enough, some judges are handling cases at lunch, or at night. In other jurisdictions, those cases are heard after the regular docket. Some caseloads need more significant time and need to be scheduled accordingly, but the key factor is to believe that these courts are necessary and helpful enough to find the resources.”

New protocols are needed, and judges have become authors of procedures manuals, which they revise to fit their particular needs. “A procedures manual containing the mission, goals and objectives, criteria for admission, and protocols is essential to the effective operation of a problem-solving court,” said Judge Cooksey. “They should include procedures for referrals, assessment, and scheduling as well as any forms and orders. It’s important to give partner agencies the opportunity to review drafts and provide input since everyone connected with the problem-solving court will use the manual. The hope is that these are orders that then can be adapted and used by District and Circuit Court.” Judge Cooksey added that while creating a manual is intensive work—she spent more than a year on the manual for Baltimore’s mental health court—it is crucial because “there are so many people involved in the process that need to be on the same page. I can now say, ‘Look in the manual.’”



photo by Jack Fino

“Drug court gave me my principles, my scruples, my morals back that were long lost.”

--Drug court graduate

“I’m coming up on four years sober. It’s been a gift. Life isn’t easy, but I’m learning how to deal with it without taking a drink or a drug.”

--Drug court graduate

Crimes' Underlying Problems

Problem-solving courts are evolving and developing. For example, the basic view of who should participate in drug court has changed dramatically since its early days.

“Drug courts, especially in the early '90s, were seen as a diversionary program. They were set up to take first-time, maybe second-time offenders, hoping to stop their cycle of drug use,” Barton said. What was discovered, he noted, was that drug court is more effective for the high-end offender. “The individuals who have tried treatment several times, have been continually nonresponsive throughout probation—these individuals have done much better in drug court than even the individuals set for diversion,” he said. “The reason being is that drug court is very intensive. The carrot that drug court provides is maybe no prison time or reduced prison time. It may be that probation is reduced from five years to possibly three years. That’s a big carrot for someone who’s looking at maybe 10 years over their head compared with someone who has maybe 60 days over their head because it’s their first offense.”

“Clearly, drug and DUI courts are not soft on these participants,” Janet Ward said. Recently retired, Ward was drug and DUI court coordinator for the Anne Arundel County District Court. “It takes a lot to be able to participate in these courts. We’re going to be looking over your shoulder—this is not a get out of jail free pass. You have to go to a case manager; you have to go to a treatment provider. You’ll probably be required to go to Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous two to five times a week and you’re going to come back in front of a judge for judicial review.”

For the judges and staff involved in problem-solving courts, the rewards appear to be great. “Every problem-solving judge I know says the same thing. You have a direct impact and you see results,” Judge Weitzman said. “You see very disheartened people who lack self-esteem and are facing huge addiction problems. You can help turn that around. Graduation days are exhilarating.”

The drug court blueprint, though evidently successful, may not translate to every social ill, but problem-solving courts are a growing segment of court systems throughout



photo by Molly Kalifut

the United States. “Drug courts are showing that when everyone sits down, things do work,” said John Fullmer, juvenile drug court coordinator for Anne Arundel County Circuit Court. “We’re saving money, we’re changing people’s lives, we’re making the streets safer. These folks that graduate from our program, you know they’re not going to be robbing you tomorrow. They’re out there, they’re working, they’re paying their taxes, they’re paying child support, they’re interacting with their kids. The positive things that result from this just grow exponentially and it all comes down to having the agencies cooperate with each other.”

The Judiciary has established a standing committee to oversee and evaluate problem-solving courts. This committee will review all requests to set up problem-solving courts, create programs to evaluate their performance, and recommend operational practices and standards.

At a Glance

What are problem-solving courts?

Many people who commit crimes have underlying problems, such as drug or alcohol addiction, or mental illness. Problem-solving courts address crime by promoting interdisciplinary approaches to address their related underlying social issues. For example:

- Drug court handles drug and alcohol-related cases through judicial intervention, intensive supervision, and immediate and consistent substance abuse treatment.
- Mental health court directs eligible offenders with serious mental illness away from incarceration and into appropriate community treatment.

Last December, Chief Judge Robert M. Bell of the Court of Appeals established the Standing Committee on Problem-Solving Courts. Under the chairmanship of Baltimore City District Judge Jamey H. Weitzman, the committee is the statewide superintendent for these courts. The committee includes two oversight committees: the Drug Court Oversight Committee, chaired by Baltimore County Circuit Judge Kathleen Gallogly Cox; and the Mental Health Court Oversight Committee, chaired by Baltimore City District Judge Charlotte M. Cooksey.

The administrative order is online at mdcourts.gov/adminorders/index.html.

Congratulations



Retired Anne Arundel County Circuit Judge Joseph Manck (right) received the Anselm Sodaro Civility Award from the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA). Judge Manck was presented with the award at the MSBA's annual business meeting in June. The MSBA gives the award each year to a judge who has demonstrated exceptional judicial temperament, civility, and courtesy.

Caroline County Circuit Judge Karen A. Murphy Jensen was awarded a 2007 Service Award from the Maryland Pro Bono Resource Center for her leadership "in the development and delivery of legal services to the poor and . . . meeting previously unmet needs of the under-represented."

Lindsay Staniszewski, with administrative services in the Charles County Circuit Court, competed in the Miss Maryland competition in June. She won the title of second runner-up and received a \$3,000 scholarship.

Rachel Wohl, executive director of the Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO), received the Chair's Award for Outstanding Leadership in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) from the Maryland State Bar Association's ADR Section. Wohl received the award during the association's annual business meeting in June.

Send submissions for Congratulations to cio@mdcourts.gov

News from the Bench

Appointments

Hon. Nancy L. Davis-Loomis, Anne Arundel Circuit Court, was appointed administrative judge for Anne Arundel County.

Hon. Thomas J. Love, Prince George's District Court, was appointed administrative judge for District 5 (Prince George's County).

Hon. John P. McKenna, Jr., Anne Arundel District Court, was appointed administrative judge for District 7 (Anne Arundel County).

Retirements

Hon. Maurice W. Baldwin, Jr., Harford County Circuit Court.

Hon. Dale R. Cathell, Court of Appeals.

Hon. James W. Dryden, Anne Arundel District Court.

Hon. Norman E. Johnson, Jr., Baltimore City District Court.

Hon. Joseph P. Manck, Anne Arundel Circuit Court.

Hon. Vincent A. Mulieri, Anne Arundel District Court.

Maryland Judiciary Profiles:

Court Information Office—and *Justice Matters*—Celebrate 10th Anniversary

The *Justice Matters* Editorial Board thought it would be appropriate, on the 10th anniversary of the Court Information Office and this newsletter, to provide an overview and history of the office.

The Maryland Judiciary created the Court Information Office in 1997 to handle activities involving media relations, public education and community outreach.

In 1994, Sally Rankin, who was then director of personnel and education for the Judiciary, was asked to begin handling media calls in addition to her primary duties. Later, the Judiciary's Committee on Public Awareness made a formal recommendation to the Judicial Conference that a public information officer position be established. The Judicial Conference adopted the recommendation, and Robert M. Bell, newly appointed as Chief Judge, posted the position and hired Rankin as the Court Information Officer.

Once on board, Rankin's duties immediately expanded. "During the same period, a couple of judges wrote to Judge Bell to seek his support for a Judiciary newsletter," Rankin recalled. "He agreed—with certain caveats—and *Justice Matters* came into being. The first issue was published in the fall of 1997." The quarterly newsletter has received praise from many, including staff members at the National Center for State Courts who said that it is the best courts newsletter in the country. It has also been cited as a news source in *The Washington Post*.

In addition to the newsletter, the Court Information Office produces educational brochures, including an overview of Maryland's court system, information for prospective jurors, an overview of the juvenile court system, and a series of coloring and activity books for children. The office also produces the Judiciary's annual highlights report, coordinates courthouse tours, partners with schools to provide educational resources, and runs a Speakers Bureau to provide groups with a chance to meet with judges to learn about the judicial process.



photo by Molly Kalifut

Court Information Officer Sally Rankin looks through the archives of 10 years of *Justice Matters*.

A core role that Rankin and the Court Information Office perform is as the Judiciary's liaison with the media by providing information to the public through press releases and responding to inquiries from reporters. "Rankin interacts with the media, both print and electronic, from town newsletter reporters, to syndicated wire columnists, all with smooth aplomb," said Prince George's County District Judge Jean Szekeres Baron.

The Court Information Office has been involved in the complex process of developing and implementing policies and procedures regarding release of public information based on the rules adopted by the Court of Appeals.

"From the very beginning, we approached it as a collaborative process involving court clerks and members of the media," said retired Court of Appeals Judge Alan Wilner. "Sally shepherded getting these groups together. It was not just a matter of relaying information to the media—she brought the media proactively into the process of developing these access rules."

Once rules were in place, implementation became the challenge. The Court Information Office is actively involved in ongoing public access issues, including electronic access of court records.

There have been many high-profile cases that have resulted in intense media interest. "Sally's office was a tremendous help in developing and implementing the orders we used with the media when I handled the same-sex case in 2006," said Baltimore City Circuit Judge M. Brooke Murdock. "They helped develop a Web page that included the pleadings, kept track of the national issue, handled all press inquiries, and was always available if I had questions or concerns."

"I think the most important job the office does is to gather information, synthesize it, and put it into a coherent form," said Chief Judge Ben Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland. "We have to respond in a timely way to media inquiries, and it's important that we are channeling the correct message."

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CIO 10th Anniversary

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Some projects have arisen in response to specific needs. The Joint Committee on Parole Issues was developed to provide more information to judges about parole issues, and improve communication between the Judiciary and the Parole Commission. Rankin staffed the committee and helped hone several vital informational pieces, including a laminated quick reference guide for judges, a hotline for judges to call with questions, and a newsletter, the *Back Bench*.

At a Glance

Court Information Office

The Court Information Office is an official liaison between the court system and people throughout the state, including schools, community groups, the media, and others. It is responsible for planning, designing, and executing programs to inform and educate the public about the services, programs, and activities of the Judiciary. The office also serves as a central repository for historical information, rules of the court, and general information about how Maryland courts function. The office focuses on developing programs and activities to increase the public's awareness of the court's role in the community. To meet that goal, the Court Information Office:

- Publishes Justice Matters, the Judiciary's quarterly newsletter
- Responds to media inquiries and provides information, statistics, and photographs
- Produces educational brochures and videos
- Maintains the Maryland Judiciary Web site, mdcourts.gov
- Keeps the public apprised of newsworthy events by issuing press releases
- Works with judges and the community to promote issues that build public trust and confidence in the justice system
- Conducts forums with the media to facilitate communication between the Judiciary and the media
- Administers a judges' Speakers Bureau

Also included within the Court Information Office are:

- The Judicial Institute, established in 1981, which is responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of in-state continuing education for Maryland judges, and
- Media Services, which is responsible for creating multi-media presentations, videos, and other audio-visual materials for the Judiciary, producing a variety of photographs and graphic materials for use throughout the Judiciary, and overseeing the Webcasting from the Court of Appeals courtroom.

Judge Joins International Forum on Child Abduction Issues

by Hon. Cathy Hollenberg Serrette

In late June, I had the privilege of participating in a forum on the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction in Ankara, Turkey. The forum was jointly sponsored by the U.S. State Department, the designated Central Authority in the United States, and the General Directorate of International Law and Foreign Relations of the Turkish Ministry of Justice.

In addition to 12 Turkish judges, participants included representatives from the U.S. State Department and a senior legal officer from the Hague Conference on Private International Law. Judge Aykut Kiliç, Turkey's director general, graciously hosted the fruitful exchange. In addition to the anticipated Hague Convention discourse, we had an opportunity to learn about Turkish history, culture, and cuisine, as well as the Turkish legal system.

Judge Kiliç arranged for a visit to the Ankara Courthouse, where we watched part of a divorce proceeding and met with the chief public prosecutor, the chief prosecutor responsible for pursuing Hague matters, and several family law judges. Ankara has a Family Division with designated judges.

The Hague Convention, signed by the U.S. in 1981 and ratified in 1986, became applicable in 1988 upon the passage of implementing legislation, the International Child Abduction Remedies Act (ICARA), 42 U.S.C. §11601 et. seq. The primary goals of the Convention are to deter persons from committing international abductions, to protect children, and to provide a prompt remedy for the return of abducted children. It provides, in short, for the prompt return of children under the age of 16 who have been wrongfully removed to, or retained in, a contracting state in violation of the custody rights of others.

In the United States, state and federal district courts have original and concurrent jurisdiction over actions arising under the Convention. Much as the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act, (UCCJEA), MD Code Ann., Family Law Article §9.5-109, allows for communication between courts of different states, the Hague Convention contemplates communication between the courts of different countries. The Convention contemplates that a decision will be reached within six weeks from the commencement of the proceeding, and, if not, the Central Authority is authorized to request a statement in writing of the reasons for the delay.

Judge Kiliç is Turkey's liaison judge for Hague Convention cases. Insofar as the United States does not have a unitary judiciary, it was not feasible to appoint a single liaison judge for communication with our courts. Accordingly, following the Malta II conference in March 2006, a Judicial Liaison Council on International Family Abduction, on which I sit, was convened to provide judicial guidance relating to international family abduction in order to foster greater collaboration between both Hague and non-Hague countries.

Given the expedited nature of Hague Convention proceedings, the more familiar the domestic and international bench is with the Convention, the better able we will be to meet its laudable goals. **Judge Serrette is a Circuit Judge for Prince George's County.**



photos courtesy of Judge Serrette



Judge Serrette (left) with members of the forum, including Judge Kiliç and Ryan Hanby of the U.S. State Department.

Helping Matters

Helping Matters profiles Judiciary employees who volunteer in their communities. If you are a volunteer or would like to nominate a fellow employee to be profiled, please write to cio@mdcourts.gov or call 410-260-1488.

Kate Kelchner

JUDICIARY JOB Law Librarian, Maryland State Law Library

ON SATURDAYS She helps Cats R Us, an Anne Arundel County volunteer group that places friendly cats with adoptive families, and spays and neuters feral cats and provides food and medical help for cats in the wild.

THE PURR-FECT JOB “I go to the Arnold shelter every Saturday for five to eight hours to feed the cats, clean out litter boxes, cages and floors, and wash towels.”

HOW SHE BECAME A ‘CAT WOMAN’ “Two years ago, I started feeding a big Maine Coon stray that would come up on my deck. I think someone just threw him out. One snowy day, half of his face was all blood. I took him to my vet, and when I said I couldn’t keep him, they introduced me to Ray Wills with Cats R Us. It started from there.”

NOW THEY’VE GOT THEIR CLAWS IN HER “When I first get to the shelter, I pet all the cats for the first 10 minutes or so. The cats are really well cared for. The building is air conditioned and heated, and the cats, once they’re determined to be healthy and friendly, are allowed out of their crates to mingle.”

WHERE’S THE MAINE COON STRAY? “His name is Milkweed, and he’s the most loving cat I’ve ever had.” Kelchner has another cat, Popcorn, whom she loves, but who is “scared of herself.”

ROOM FOR ONE MORE? “I’m sure if a really, really special kitty comes along....”



photo courtesy of Kate Kelchner

Unsung Heroes

Judiciary employees and others working with the courts frequently go “above and beyond” to provide service or preserve safety. The following are two recent examples.

Baltimore County Circuit Court

Three court managers went “the extra mile” this spring to help locate a long-lost childhood sweetheart of a former Towson resident. Managers Irene Summers, Barbara Raine, and Carol Hurlock searched land and marriage records to help a man find his first love. The couple had met in 1942 and planned to marry, but parted ways in 1951. After an intense search, the managers located records for the woman, but discovered she had died seven years earlier. The man expressed his gratitude for their efforts in a letter to the court, saying, “I can go forward now with much more peace inside.”

Prince George’s County District Court

In June, a defendant suddenly fought being handcuffed after Judge Thurman Rhodes ordered him into temporary custody. He broke loose, destroying furniture and attacking the bailiffs and deputies who rushed to secure him. Other bailiffs and deputies responded immediately to the call for assistance, and the defendant was taken into custody. Injured in the confrontation were Bailiff Herbert Williams, who suffered a broken leg, Bailiff Willie Johnson, whose cheek was fractured, and Deputy Sheriff Petit, who suffered cartilage damage in his nose. “It was a dangerous situation that could have escalated into something even worse without the cooperation of all the bailiffs and deputies,” said John Richardson, head bailiff.

If you know of other Unsung Heroes, send an e-mail to cio@mdcourts.gov.

NEWS FROM DRUG TREATMENT COURTS

Howard County Spotlighted at National Conference

by Hon. Neil E. Axel

On June 16, the Howard County District Court DUI court program was spotlighted as part of the 13th annual training conference presented by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) in Washington, D.C. The four-day conference attracted more than 3,100 participants from around the country and featured presentations on all aspects of drug and DUI courts.

The presentation by members of the Howard County DUI court team focused on how Howard County adapted its drug court model and applied it to DUI offenders. The panel included Judge Neil Edward Axel, judge-in-charge of the drug and DUI court program, Bobbie Fine, Esq., drug/DUI court coordinator, and Brent Horney, DUI court case manager.

The NADCP is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1994 to reduce the negative social impact of substance abuse, crime, and recidivism by: promoting and advocating for the establishment, growth and funding of drug courts; providing for the collection and dissemination of information; and providing sophisticated training, technical assistance and mutual support to association members. [Judge Axel is a District Judge for Howard County.](#)

Baltimore City Juvenile Drug Court Celebrates Drug Court Awareness Month

by Cheré Brown

In honor of National Drug Court Awareness Month, the Baltimore City juvenile drug court program hosted its first annual “Color My Future Clean” art show on May 18 at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center. The art show featured drug court participants’ artwork and essays from the “Drug Court Works” essay campaign. The participants displayed posters, paintings, and other artwork, and some participants presented their essays to the audience.

On behalf of the drug court program, Judge David W. Young addressed the youth, congratulated them for their creativity and participation, and presented them with special awards for their accomplishments. The entire drug court team was represented and also had the opportunity to congratulate the youth. Refreshments were served, and many came out to support the youth and to explore the new energy in the Baltimore City juvenile drug treatment court. [Ms. Brown is clinical director of the Harambee treatment team with the Baltimore City juvenile drug treatment court.](#)

Cheré Brown shows some of the artwork and essays on display at the “Color My Future Clean” event.



photo courtesy of Baltimore juvenile drug court

Maryland Judiciary Joins Race for the Cure

by Mylita Jacob

It began as a request brought to the Workplace Improvement Team team to organize an event to honor Sandra Nardi, a co-worker who lost her courageous battle with breast cancer this past spring. It became a Judiciary-wide effort to show support for all of our co-workers and their families who struggle with this disease.

The Justice Cares Team boarded the bus for Washington, D.C., on June 2 to participate in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. The total team donations exceeded \$8,000. We were amazed.

During the race, “cureleaders” energized the crowd and announced each of the 1,300 registered teams as they passed. Imagine our exhilaration when we heard “Maryland Judiciary For The Cure” being called. I’m sure our cheers were heard above the crowd.

It was a powerful day, with 46,000 faces of hope, determination, and courage walking or running with us.

These were the faces of people who had raised nearly \$4 million to fight breast cancer.

As team captain, I would like to thank Justice Cares for their enthusiasm and exceptional fundraising efforts, and of course, the Judiciary family for their generosity. As a breast cancer survivor, I have learned the two most important things we can do to fight this disease—raise awareness and raise money. We did a good job on both. Sandi would be proud.



photo courtesy of Mylita Jacob

The Justice Cares Team gathers before the Race for the Cure event.

The Justice Cares Team included: Mylita Jacob, Jennifer Boswell, Latanya Green, Jackie Cullen, Andrea Johnson, Tammy Sitar, Cookie Pollock, Connie Winkel, Bill Winkel, Rosemary Taylor, Kathy Ruge, Estella Gambrell, Laurie Burr, Anupama Sinha, Marti Neuenschwander, Kelly Smith, Charlene Boswell,

Greer Sumner, Faye Gaskin, Wendy Wilson, Keri Blanton, Diana Newcomer, Tonya Quesada, and Deanna Arilola.

Ms. Jacob is programming training manager for the Judicial Information Systems.



Chief Judge Robert M. Bell of the Maryland Court of Appeals received an unexpected “law suit” from his fellow chiefs at the annual meeting of the Conference of Chief Justices in August. At left, he shows the tailored suit, including pink jacket, white linen cuffed trousers, and blue shirt, to fellow conference members. They presented the suit to Judge Bell in appreciation for his service as president of the conference. He also received the customary engraved pewter platter at the end of his term as “chief” chief.